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Concept to Completion - Camp Patriot

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

If you build it, they will come." That is the message that was given to the amphibious Seabees of the West Coast months before Operation Iraqi Freedom ever began.

"They" are nearly 3,000 joint-service, permanent residents and a rotating stampede of U.S. Marines that have kept the Seabee built Camp Patriot population fluctuating since December, 2002.

Naval Central Command (NAVCENT), forward stationed in Bahrain, tasked Capt. Donald P. Cook and Naval Beach Group One, homeported in Coronado, Calif., to architect a base camp – and when it came to architecture of a camp, Commodore Cook turned to the experts.

The U.S. Navy Seabees of Amphibious Construction Battalion One (ACB-1), also homeported in Coronado, Calif., were the one's that had to build it – and build, and build and build they did.

"We spent months preparing for this," explained Lt. Cmdr. George N. Suther of Atlanta, Ga., Operations Officer (S3) for ACB-1. "Our Seabees are accustomed to building and maintaining a beach camp that houses approximately 1,200 – we had to excel beyond that, and come up with a plan that would accommodate 4,500."

Suther, tasked with the title of Base Camp Operations Commander, said the main focus had to be on sustainability. "We can build anything, that's what Seabee's do – but when you stretch your normal limits to the number they were talking, you really have to sit down and discuss it."

Suther and the rest of the staff of ACB-1 put together a plan that covered the big issues. Supply concentrated on food, fuel and water, while Alfa Co. responded to transportation needs.

Bravo Co. organized port operations, and Charlie Co. dealt with camp maintenance. After much discussion and planning with NAVCENT, the PHIBCBs from California put together a plan that would require their own assets and an addi-



Seabee Row at Dusk

tional six-point-four million dollar 'city layout' that would become Camp Patriot.

Suther, along with his Charlie Company Commander Lt. Jay Bieszke, developed a site plan that allowed for the phased erection of the camp. Suther and Bieszke explained that concentration was placed on developing a limited amount of real estate, while continuing to focus on force protection and centralized amenities.

"We had a perceived shortfall," explained Suther, "and that was that our battalion wasn't designed to handle such a large tasking." Perceived was all it turned out to be. According to Suther, the leadership at the unit level really banded together, and that made the difference. "We came together, we spent long hours together, and we put together our plan. When the order came down, we were 100-percent ready, and it's apparent."

To ensure the readiness that came to be,

Suther had several planning conversations with Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Cowan, Ops Officer from the only other PHIBCBs in the Navy – Amphibious Construction Battalion Two, homeported in Little Creek, Va., during which the addition of 58 Seabees were provided to support the camp construction and its maintenance.

Like any city, "the house that the Amphibious Seabees built" started small and rapidly grew. "When we arrived on station, we had no assets," reflected Suther. "The people were arriving, but the equipment was not – we had to ask for help."

The help came from Lt. Col. Greg Maida and the semipermanent Army soldiers of the 143rd Transportation Command, homebased in Orlando, Fl. Maida, familiar with the area and the local contractors, worked in Seabee style with the PHIBCBs to lay the cornerstones of Camp Patriot.

"Lt. Col. Maida was a huge help," says Suther. "The camp would have been built, but it wouldn't have been built as quickly or as smoothly in the early phases without the help of the 143rd – they are honorary Seabees because of the 'Can Do' spirit they show."

Forced to contract some things initially, the Seabees brought Camp Patriot to infancy with the items that directly affected the personal lives of every Sailor, Soldier, Marine, Airman and Coast Guardsman that started to arrive. Necessities like potable and non-potable water, meals-ready-to-eat (MRE) and contracted hot meals, as well as basic shelters started the city crawling, but as the tools started to arrive, the sleepy little dust-town quickly became a mobile metropolis.

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'United We Land' - BMU-1 Beachmasters Own the Beach

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

In the tranquility of an early morning sunrise, U.S. Navy vessels can barely be seen transiting along the watery horizon. Along the shoreline, waves rustle in, and the Sailors of Beach Master Unit One (BMU-1), homported in Coronado, Calif., stand ready to receive amphibious landing craft of all types.

According to Chief Warrant Officer David Hanna, the primary vessels stabbing the beaches of Camp Patriot are Landing Craft Utility (LCU), Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and Marine Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV).

"The LCU and LCAC are multifunctional transports," explained Hanna. "Each of them can carry weapons systems, cargo, rolling stock and personnel."

The AAV, often referred to as a 'fighting duck,' is essentially an armored personnel carrier, capable of carrying 25 combat ready Marines and their required gear.

"Beach Masters own the beach," explained Constructionman Justin Jardenaux, a 20-year-old Sulphur, La. native. "We are the experts, and we run the show from the three fathom mark to the high-water mark."

The Beach Masters of BMU-1 have recently been charged with managing multiple amphibious offloads at more than one location.

"The two offloads that have taken place so far have kept us pretty busy," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class James Wallace, 27, from Phoenix, Ariz.

According to Wallace and Hanna, BMU-1 directed and managed a recent offload of multiple pieces of rolling stock and track vehicles,

hundreds of pallets of supplies and ammunition and a few "quads;" large shipping containers carrying various pieces of maintenance equipment.

"Our guys did really fantastic," declared Wallace. "We worked a solid 8 to ten hours a day for three days with just two beach party teams covering three beaches – we had our work cut out for us!"

Wallace went on to explain that each beach party team consists of approximately 15 Sailors. Each team has a beach party commander, salvage officer, flank petty officer, ramp marshals, traffic control personnel and at least one two-man Lighter, Amphibious, Resupply, Cargo (LARC) crew.

The LARC is a floating tow-truck that enables beach masters to aide landing craft when necessary, conduct salvage activities, rescue personnel and assist in damage control.

With more operations on the horizon, the sailors of BMU-1 continue their efforts in ensuring that the men and women of the U.S. Armed Services receive their cargo and personnel dry and whole.



Emirates work together in the offload of the UAE Ship Marawah (L81). Chief Warrent Officer Three (select) David Hanna and Chief Boatswains Mate Derrick Wagner (center), observe and direct their team of U.S. and UAE Sailors as they offload and "clear the ramp" of the multiple pieces of rolling stock that have arrived in support of the Gulf Country Council operation "Peninsula Shield." (Photo by JO1 Joseph Krypel)

It has been a pleasure having the opportunity to serve the men and women of Camp Patriot. While I wasn't able to cover everything that everyone would have liked, I hope that you have enjoyed - as I have - Camp Patriot's own Patriot Press. This Final Edition sums up what I believe to be the story we had. Thank You for providing such a historical view!

The Editor

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Joint Medical Staff to Provide Best Care in Kuwait

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

A joint-service American and Kuwaiti military force of more than 1,500 personnel recently participated in a mass casualty drill here in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The drill was the culmination of weeks of regular



HM2 Melissa Gornitzka assesses a patient during Camp Patriot's recent mass casualty drill. More than 30 American and Kuwaiti medical personnel provided treatment to mock casualties. (Photo by JO1 Joseph Krypel)

training exercises designed to prepare the medical staff and support personnel for future operations.

"One of our primary goals is to test the response capabilities of the joint American-Kuwaiti Medical Center and its staff," said Task Force 51 medical plan-

ner Lt. Cmdr. Jerry Gardner, of Elizabethtown, Ky.

"We all prepare in our specific areas on a regular basis, and with close coordination and planning between the Navy, Marine Corps and Kuwaiti assets we can do anything that is medically required of us here," said Gardner, 41.

With a combined total medical staff of more than 30 people responding, the day-to-day operations of the joint medical facility quickly turned from sick-call and immunizations to field triage and treatment.

Gardner explained that the shift in operations was something that every member of his staff was prepared for. "We've organized teams based on the known assets we have on hand. Our teams are comprised of sailors, Marines and Kuwaiti medical staff, as well as others from around Camp Patriot that will act as stretcher-bearers and masters-at-arms."

For the purposes of this exercise, the joint medical staff was confronted with a very real possible threat: falling debris from an intercepted, inbound missile.

According to Cmdr. James Gregory, Director of Trauma, five to 10 individuals were selected to act as casualties in multiple locations around Camp Patriot.

"This is to test our communications and response; it wouldn't be a very good test if we all knew what and where something like this was going to happen," Gregory, a 44-year-old reservist recalled to active duty is a trauma surgeon in Champaign, Illinois.

Once the drill began and the mock casualties arrived, all reacted with the utmost professionalism. "It was rewarding to see all our assets pull together in

such a fast and professional way," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Shane Lane, a 34-year-old reservist from Kansas City, Mo., who played the role of an off-site responder. "Although we had some language barriers, the team-play between our Kuwaiti colleagues was excellent. There was very little question as to what we were there for and what we had to do in order to save lives."

Although the medical goals were to test response time and preparedness of the clinic, other players were and would be involved in the event of a true crisis. Lt. Cmdr. Francis Foley, one of Camp Patriot's chaplains and a Roman Catholic priest, described his role as one that can shift from one extreme to another.

"The role of the religious programs staff is to determine the faith group of the patients being treated, and to provide the best possible human care and comfort," explained Father Foley, 44, from Philadelphia, Pa. "In the event of injury, serious or otherwise, it is our role to provide sacraments, spiritual comfort and in some cases, last rites."

Lasting about one hour, Camp Patriot's first test of medical response was considered to be a complete success by its staff and planners.

"All roles were covered, and while communications around the camp and the different commands could be improved, we have made significant progress in our ability to respond to mass casualty situations," summed up Gardner.

Concept . . .

Cont'd from page 1

Like lightning, necessities were up and running and the busy-bees of ACB-1 started with amenities. Shower trailers, movie tents, laundry-services, internet cafe, phone tent and the only Navy-run galley in the theater of operations – it may not be Atlanta, but it is the best home a Seabee can build – and there is something to be said about that!

"Our battalion is proud of the fact that we are a self-sufficient organization and did not have to rely on a lot of outside contracts, however, where it made good business sense we contracted to eliminate the stress our comparatively smaller work force," said Suther.

"It was like starting a fire," continued Suther. "First came tents, then the working spaces, then the strong-backing of tents, and finally – air conditioning."

According to Suther, the plan went better than expected. "The men and women here really put

some sweat into this place, and it was growing fast – we were actually struggling to find the real-estate to put things."

The PHIBCB team understood that what they were building was in direct support of the war fighters, and they never complained about long hours. "No one could be more proud of the effort demonstrated here," praised Suther. "This was a labor of love, and it's evident by the craftsmanship you see – everyone here, even our Fleet Bees of Bravo Company, put in the sweat to strongback tents and build protective bunkers."

Camp Patriot is built on 200-acres of shared space with the Kuwaiti Naval Forces. With areas pre-designated for ammunition, parking, and harbor assets – people were placed where they safely could be.

Camp Patriot has three residential 'suburbs', known as Green Tent I and II and White Tent Area. "It's like a family here – sometimes dysfunctional – but a family just the same," laughed Suther. "We wanted to make sure we were living and relaxing together as a camp, not just working together."

But working together is key. The entire population of Camp Patriot pitches in to support the camps infrastructure with force protection, galley food service attendants and cooks, sand-bag working parties and camp-wide clean up days.

While Operation Iraqi Freedom winds down, the camp that could soon be history continues to grow. Since its birth, Camp Patriot has housed more than 8,000 total people living in 341 tents. Camp Patriot filled over 125,000 sandbags and built 138 protective bunkers. By mid April the Camp Patriot "Sand Dune Diner" had served 139,000 meals, provided 19,000 cases of Meal-Ready-to-Eat (MREs), and 35,000 cases of bottled water. Four thousand haircuts, 250 porta-potties, 120,000 pounds of mail and 190 movies have shown to round out the numbers.

Camp Patriot is currently home to the only Amphibious Seabees in the United States Navy – specializing in Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) operations and Joint Logistics Over the Shore in support of U.S. Marine and Army missions.

Camp Patriot Helps Train Over 100 GCC Member "Peninsula Shield" Forces

By JOI Joseph Krypel

Approximately 100 United Arab Emirates Sailors and Airmen participated in coalition forces chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) training conducted recently.

The UAE forces have recently come here



Lt. Cmdr. Edan Antoine, helps a United Arab Emirates (UAE) airman with the proper wearing of his protective mask. The GCC was established following Operation Desert Storm as a protective coalition for North Arabian Gulf countries that may require it. (Photo by JOI Joseph Krypel)

in support of the Gulf Country Council (GCC) protective resolution, called Peninsula Shield, taking place for neighboring state Kuwait.

Lt. Cmdr. Edan Antoine, Camp Patriot coordinator for CBR-D training and supplies, conducted the hour long refresher.

"This is another chance for service members in the area - from every nation - to get the ongoing training that is provided," explained Antoine. "You can never get too much training when it comes to this kind of stuff."

Antoine and the UAE students discussed, and walked through the various steps taken in mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) levels.

"Different levels offer different measures of protection, and are put in place, in advance when possible, to protect the folks that are here," explained Antoine.

MOPP levels range from zero to four (0-4). Zero, being the most relaxed, requires service members to carry their protective masks as well as the balance of their protective gear at all times.

MOPP level 4, the highest level of preparedness, has the individual fully dressed-out in protective suit, boots, gloves and mask.

"It's important to remember that at any

time, and for any length of time, you could be called to a higher level of protective posture," Antoine reminded the class. "It could be a matter of minutes, hours or days before you stand-down or ramp-up to the next level."

First Lt. Ahmad Turkey, a Super Puma pilot in the UAE National Aviation Force thought the training provided by the U.S. was excellent, as well as necessary.

"We all go through the same training, but on different sides of the world," said Turkey. "Training refreshers like these give us both new perspectives, and allows us to build our coalition with the people that care as much about our neighbors, Kuwait, as we do as members of the GCC. Now we train together - here, in the same region with mostly the same equipment."

In addition to protective gear "donning" and preparation, Antoine touched on personal decontamination procedures, and individual medication guidelines that could become necessary in the event of a chemical or biological attack.

Antoine is deployed with a subordinate unit of Commander, Task Force 51. CTF 51 is in the Central Command Area of Responsibility conducting training and operations in preparation for any possible future tasking.

Darity and Argo: Sniffing out The Crimes

By PH1 Arlo Abrahamson

As the U.S. Navy continues its efforts to improve its force protection at home and abroad, Navy police dogs and their handlers are being deployed to forward operating areas to assist security personnel. Three weeks ago, Master-At-Arms 2nd Class Phillip Darity and his dog, Argo, were patrolling the streets of 32nd street Naval Base in San Diego, Calif., as members of the Commander Naval Region Southwest Security Force. Now they are forward deployed to Camp Patriot where they are providing bomb detection and patrol capabilities that ensure the camp and its assigned personnel stay safe.

Darity has been a dog handler for over two years and knows that he shares a special bond between himself and his canine partner, Argo.

"When I'm deployed, I'm with my dog all day," said Darity. "We live together in the same tent. When I go somewhere, Argo goes too. I know a lot about Argo and he knows a lot about me. Our partnership is what enables us to accomplish our mission," added Darity.

The mission of a bomb-detection dog and its handler is vital to Camp Patriot. Police dogs and their handlers screen hundreds of oncoming cars and trucks entering the camp each day.

"Having a dog with the special capabilities that Argo has is not only for detection, but it provides a major de-terrent to our potential adversaries," says Darity. "Also, Camp Patriot personnel feel safer knowing that our

dogs are here, so it's a source of heightened morale," he added.

Argo, a full-bred Belgian Malinois, is a regular member of the U.S. Navy. He deploys just like any military member and will eventually transfer to a new duty station when he finishes his current tour. He carries with him the long time honored tradition of faithful service that dogs have contributed throughout the history of military operations saving the lives of countless U.S. service men and women.

Darity is the first certified handler to work with Argo since he reporting on board last year as a newly trained police dog. The two have worked diligently to achieve the necessary qualifications and proficiency to deploy to a forward area. Darity must ensure that Argo maintains a proficiency rate of 95% for explosive detection. It's a qualification that ensures a dog handler and his police dog will be able to meet the challenges that come from operating in a place like Camp Patriot.

"We place high expectations on our dogs as well as ourselves," said Darity.

Because of the importance of protecting America's military forces deployed to forward areas like Camp Patriot, the role of the Navy Master-At-Arms dog handlers and their canine partners will continue to be vital. It's the man and dog team of Darity and Argo that will enable U.S. forces at Camp Patriot to carry out their mission in safety.

Forward Deployed - Forward Thinking: Navy Afloat Trauma System Takes Shape

By JOI Joseph Krypel

With the threat of potential military conflict looming on the horizon, visions of embattled and bloody battlefields from the past flash in the minds of many – military and civilian alike.

The possibility of casualties will likely be a concern for ground troops as they prepare to carry out the deadly missions for which they have trained their whole careers. They may wonder how quickly they will be evacuated from the field and treated should they be wounded. The forward-deployed medical staff of Task Force (TF) 51 has an innovative answer – the Navy Afloat Trauma System (NATS).

NATS creates an amphibious task force trauma network patterned after the best civilian trauma networks – known more commonly as the 911 emergency system.

The civilian 911 system provides fast-response communications from your home or cellular phone to emergency dispatchers. The dispatcher then contacts the nearest ambulance for near immediate response. The network has the capability of contacting and dispatching an ambulance, fireman or policeman that is closest to you, therefore eliminating geographic or expertise restrictions.

According to Cmdr. James Gregory, TF-51 Director of Trauma and the conceptual engineer behind NATS, this plan is modeled after the civilian trauma, or 911 system of communications and resource allocation, into the already tested current military structure.

Current operational capabilities allow for one of four operating rooms per ship to provide services 24-hours a day as necessary, without the addition of added resources. NATS greatly enhances that capability by using six “big deck” amphibious assault ships from the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, as well as the British Royal Navy.

NATS is a combined effort between the United States and United Kingdom. In addition to U.S. ships, the Royal Navy hospital ship Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Argus has been blended in to add even more valuable resources to this very important coalition action.

According to Gregory, the Argus brings the addition of 100 beds and additional specialized staffing, providing for even more high-end treatment for the patients that will use NATS.

“This changes the way we currently do business,” explained Gregory. “Each amphibious ready group or ARG has its own clinical capabilities. Combining those capabilities into a network of care providers and care facilities takes away the possibility of shortfalls that may plague one location.”

One way of looking at this is by envisioning your local hospital. Hospitals have numbers of

floors – all working together, and according to Gregory, all providing varied levels of support to one another as required, but each maintaining an operational level of independence for their particular specialty requirements.

Gregory went on to add that traditional at-sea amphibious hospital practices allow for a single or small number of critical care patients aboard any given ship. Once treated, the patient or patients are rapidly transferred to a much higher care facility – usually within the United States.

Gregory explained that NATS draws together over 1500 medical personnel to include individual medical specialists from the various ships and coordinates them to respond to emergencies in an organized manner by using a common communication network, similar to the civilian 911 system.

“Three of the U.S. ‘big decks’, along with the RFA Argus, will be used as primary casualty receiving treatment ships; they’ll get called into action first. The balance of the ships, all with equal capabilities, will be used in a secondary and overflow nature – basically staying in a medical stand-by mode until needed,” explained Gregory.

Having the combined medical facility space, or added floors, is one thing, but the exchange of people and their knowledge is what really brings the network together medically.

“We’re using currently placed medical personnel and cross decking, or exchanging, individuals to areas of aide that most require them – whether it’s on the ship they are currently stationed, or a sister ship 10-miles away.” In addition to the changes being made, medical augment personnel will supplement the staffs already on station – providing the manpower needed to take on most any medical crisis.

In union with the CTF 51 assets, the medical facilities of the USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), homeported in Baltimore, Md. will be used within NATS as the primary location for an even higher level of care.

“The Comfort would serve as a primary medical treatment facility at sea for high-level care, and provide an additional 1,000 bed staffing capability,” added Gregory. While the Comfort has a much higher bed count, Gregory explained that the amphibious assault ships were more suitable for receiving the high level of air traffic that would likely be needed in a mass casualty scenario. The Comfort allows for a single aircraft to land on one heliport pad.

High-level care is defined as a level of care that has enhanced surgical capabilities, to include subspecialists that include eye doctors, ear, nose and throat doctors, brain surgeons, and OB-GYN specialists – all enhanced by radiological specialists using computerized axial tomography (CAT) scanners. CAT scanners are used most to evaluate

and investigate extreme injuries to the head, chest, abdomen and pelvic area.

According to Gregory, the plan will eventually bring all seven U.S. ships and the U.K. vessel together into one 1,500-bed floating hospital that can provide a comprehensive trauma capability.

Gregory said once you have the sea-based facilities you must have a means of taking a soldier or Marine from the field, potentially hundreds of miles away, and getting him to the best care possible. “Starting with the field medic, a call would be made to a direct air support center (DASC). DASC acts as a dispatcher for medical air support to and from the battlefield,” he said.

Upon receiving a call, DASC personnel dispatch air assets to the casualty location, while at the same time choose from many ground-based medical facilities near the battle front that are available, including six initial treatment facilities that travel with ground forces, called forward resuscitative surgery suites, which include a mini operating facility. The job of these forward-deployed medical units is to provide immediate triage and stabilization of patients before sending them on to better-equipped facilities at sea. Then NATS takes over.

Gregory compared the NATS communications network to a civilian 911 system by describing the process of the single communications network between the afloat hospitals and various locations on the ground. He said NATS solves the problem of who to call by centralizing the communications from the field to one point – RAMPART. RAMPART, located aboard USS Bonhomme Richard takes its name from the old “Emergency 911” television show and acts as the center point for casualty direction; ultimately determining the level of care required, and to what medical facility that the patient should be sent.

“When a call comes into RAMPART, they evaluate the patient, divert him to one of the ships in the net,” explained Gregory. “This keeps the flow controlled so that no one ship or platform will get overrun.”

Once aboard, the patient will be treated by one of many medical personnel. According to Gregory, the optimal time aboard, or “on the floor,” would be no more than 48-hours before the patients are either returned to duty, or sent on to a higher level of care.

“We’ll make everyone as comfortable as possible,” Gregory reflected, “but our primary goal is to ensure that each and every patient gets the absolute best medical care that is available; be that within NATS or back in the United States.”

“NATS dramatically improves our ability to rapidly transport casualties from the battle field to the operating room,” concluded Gregory. “We’ve created the first fully-functional floating trauma center.”

Specialized Rail Battalion Provides "Source of Power" to Camp Patriot

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

Army railway operations have played a vital role in the movement of troops and their equipment, as well as humanitarian supplies to forward areas in times of peace and of war. For the men of the 757th Transportation Company (TC) (Railway) the tense times upon us are no different.

"Our responsibilities are trains – fixing track, installing track, maintaining track – all aspects of locomotive operation and repair," explained Capt. Josef Sujet, 757 TC Detachment One officer in charge. "If there's a railroad around, we can run it!"

"Everything we do is focused around ensuring that our locomotives can get from one point to another," continued Sujet. "Locomotives are extremely powerful machines, and over the course of history, the soldiers of the 757th have adopted their rail source of strength into the battalion motto of 'Source of Power.'"

According to Sujet, his team has the capability to build and maintain railroad track, and operate and repair diesel-electric locomotives anywhere in the world.

Sujet explained that members of the 757th teamed up with their British counterparts last year during operation "Log Viper" in Ashchurch, England, where they worked side-by-side to install over 1,000 feet of rail.

"It's not often that we have the chance

to work side-by-side with our allies," said Sujet. "Our soldiers took the opportunity to learn, and share their experiences with our partners."

Sujet and his 10-man team of recalled reservists are playing the role of an advance party here – sent to Camp Patriot with the



task of analyzing and planning for the humanitarian efforts that would take place should a war with Iraq take place. But the members of Detachment One aren't just planners, according to Sujet; they are a specialized team able to focus on all aspects of running and repairing the rails if required.

"We're a small team," explained Sujet, "but everyone here plays a valuable role if we get called upon to take part in any efforts. Our group has the expertise required, which includes locomotive operations and repair, track repair, welding, movement control, and intelligence."

Known within the Army as the "Home of Army Rail," and "Source of Power," the 757th is the Army's only deployable rail battalion. "We are the experts when it comes to railroading," explained Sujet. "If there are rails that have been destroyed – we can rebuild them. If locomotives break-down – we can repair them. We do it all on the rails!"

According to Sujet, technology and other means of transport have narrowed the role that rail units play, but they are still extremely powerful and important. "We are specialized and we are small – but we are the only ones that can perform the composite rail mission."

As a result of their unique specialties, Sujet said the men and women of the 757th are utilized extensively during peacetime operations, enhancing the readiness of not only the unit – but of the military as a whole.

The 757th TC(Railway) unit would help deliver humanitarian supplies to an Iraqi people recovering from regime change.

The 757th is headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., and has additional detachments at Ft. McCoy, Wis., Chicago, Ill., and Granite City, Ill. Sujet and his team are activated and deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Reenlistment Under Fire!

Engineering Aid 1st Class Peter Adams of Amphibious Construction Battalion One (ACB-1) accepts his certificate of reenlistment from Cmdr. George Suther. Adams' reenlistment was the first Camp Patriot reenlistment, and possibly the first to be done in theater after the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Adams reenlisted on March 20, 2003. Adams is from Santa Barbara Calif. and joined the Navy in December, 1988. (U.S. Navy photo by Photographers Mate 3rd Class Aaron Pineda)



Combat JAG: Navy legal officer brings expertise to Operation Iraqi Freedom

By JOI Joseph Krypel

What would you do if you were to tally out of contact with your life as you know it? What if you were living in the sand - working in a foreign place - not knowing exactly what to do, when to do it, or how to deal with a legal problem half-way around the world?

This is how some deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom feel and live.

Lieutenant Jon Peppetti, the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) for Commander, Amphibious Group Three (CPG-3) has been placed in a position to make a difference in these types of cases - forward deployed with troops serving on the ground in Kuwait.

As the SJA for CPG-3, Peppetti's primary role is to act as legal counsel for Rear Adm. W. Clyde Marsh and all of his subordinate commanders and commanding officers - including Commander, Camp Patriot," explained Peppetti.

In this role, Peppetti's responsibilities vary greatly. "I assist with the legal aspects of mission planning and routinely conduct training in a number of areas such as rules of engagement (ROE), the use of force and the handling enemy prisoners of war (EPW)."

Additionally, Peppetti ex-

plained that he regularly provides command advice on everything from the administration of military justice, to the proper conduct of investigations, agreements with our host-nation, and individual legal services for military personnel.

"I knew coming to CPG-3 would offer great challenges," Peppetti continued, "... but our participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom presented opportunities that I never imagined."

Although Peppetti enjoys the challenge of advising commanders and commanding officers in a wartime environment, he maintains that his greatest satisfaction comes from assisting individual service members with personal issues.

While handling personal matters may seem commonplace to most, U.S. servicemen and women deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom have a number of obstacles to overcome in day-to-day personal tasks.

"People are here to do a difficult job and they don't need additional distractions when living in harm's way. Legal issues can be tough enough to handle at home; when you're thousands of miles away, they can seem impossible to deal with."

Since Peppetti's arrival in Kuwait, he has fielded hundreds of questions from ser-

vice men and women on a variety of legal assistance matters. "Some people have legal issues that existed before they were deployed, and others have had problems arise since their arrival."

"I help them understand what rights they have, and in many cases I can help alleviate the problem by drafting a letter, sending an e-mail to the right person or preparing a power of attorney," explained Peppetti.

According to Peppetti, short-notice deployment calls provided little time for many to tie up loose ends, and as a result, some get distracted - not because of what they may be called upon to do, but because they feel like they may be losing control of their personal lives while deployed.

Peppetti explained that one tool available to help is the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act. This federal law provides protections and benefits to military members whose active duty service has materially affected their ability to meet certain civil obligations. It can be used, for example to cap pre-service indebtedness at a six percent interest rate, and postpone civil lawsuits.

Unfortunately many don't know how to take advantage of these resources.

"Often the issues are simple to resolve, but people

aren't sure who to contact or what to ask - that's where I can help."

In addition to assisting with legal problems, Peppetti has also been able to help service members with personal goals, such as applying for U.S. citizenship.

"I have helped a number of people complete the application paperwork and I've worked with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to make sure those who have already filed aren't penalized by this deployment."

"Working towards these personal goals keeps morale high - and good morale is crucial for mission accomplishment."

According to Peppetti, he is proud to help people focus on the difficult missions at hand, by helping resolve problems at home.

"It's a privilege for me to help all the servicemen and women at Camp Patriot who make incredible sacrifices for our country," Peppetti concluded, "That's why being here is so important to me."

Peppetti graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Notre Dame in 1992, received his commission in January, 1995, and earned his law degree from the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Law in 1996. He is a practicing member of the bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Seabees Strong-back Tents at Camp Patriot

By PH3 Aaron Pineda

For the past few months Seabees from Amphibious Construction Battalions One (ACB-1) and Two (ACB-2) have been working hard “strong-backing” the camp. For those unfamiliar with this term, it’s the process of converting a standard general purpose medium tent into a strong-back tent. Tent poles are replaced with a solid framed body constructed by 2x4’s. This offers not only greater protection from the elements: dust storms, wind, and rain, but also a greater degree of living comfort.

“Along with enhancing our quality of life here, the decision to strong-back our tents is one phase of camp development that transitions the expeditionary tents into more stable and long lasting places of berthing”, says Lt. Jay Bieszke, ACB-1 camp officer in charge.

The strong-back process begins in the prefabrication yard where a cut crew manufactures everything from the stairs, ridgebeams, and hip rafters down to the floors. Next this prefabricated material makes it’s way to another builder crew where it is erected, and then later “skinned”, a term used to describe the process of pulling the tent tarp over the 2x4 frame.

One of the challenges that faces the crews involved in the strong-backing process here at Camp Patriot is working with uncooperative soil. The ground, which is comprised of either hardened sand, or gravel, has made it difficult for the crews to obtain an even level, a crucial step for proper construction. Engineering Aide Constructionman Sanchez of ACB-2 comments on some of these obstacles and what steps were taken to overcome them.

“The hardest thing to work with is compact soil. This ground is very hard, and it’s been tough getting an even level for flooring in some instances. If we make a mistake, not getting the right level and start to build, eventually we’ll have to start all over again because all the wood is prefabricated and won’t align right. We’ve had to do a lot of cutting, and filling in some areas to compensate for the drastic changes in elevation.”

In spite of tough ground, weather that ranges from hot to cold, and sandstorms, the crews have constructed an average of five to six strong-backs a day. Currently, 210 of the projected 270 expeditionary tents have been converted to strong-backs. The hard working Amphibious Construction Battalion Seabees continue to make these much appreciated camp enhancements.

Makin’ It Strong

Seabees from Amphibious Construction Battalion One apply the "skin" of a strong-back tent as part of camp construction. The efforts of the Amphibious Construction Battalion have made Camp Patriot a much better place to live for all that stay for a long time, or for those just passing through. From the cold of Korea to the heat of Kuwait, the Seabees have been “building to fight, and fighting for what they build” since WWII.



U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Visits Camp Patriot

By JO1 Joseph Krypzel

The top U.S. official in Kuwait, the Honorable Richard H. Jones, United States Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, spent the day amongst the nearly 3,000 U.S. servicemen and woman stationed at Camp Patriot.

Upon his arrival, Jones, a native of Shreveport, La., took a few minutes to visit with the Kuwaiti Chief of Naval Forces, Maj. Gen. Ahmad Y. Al Mulla and his staff, during which time he thanked Al Mulla for the hospitality and cooperation he and his country have provided to the leaders and servicemembers of the United States.

Ambassador Jones then joined Capt. Donald P. Cook, Commander, Camp Patriot, and his key staff in a two-hour tour during which time the highlights of Camp Patriots' "one-service" team became apparent.

Of particular interest to the ambassador was the Elevated Causeway System (ELCAS) currently under construction by the U.S. Navy Seabees from both U.S. coasts. The ELCAS will serve as an additional tool in the ongoing Combined Joint Logistics Over the Shore (CJLOTS) activities. CJLOTS allows the in-stream and pier side offload of supplies, equipment and ordnance from Army and Navy prepositioning ships, to reach the troops in a timelier manner.

The combined efforts of Amphibious Construction Battalion One (ACB-1), homeported in Coronado, Calif., and ACB-2, homeported in Little Creek, Va., showed the ambassador that the U.S. Navy Seabees and their "Can Do" mindset continue to be the premier engineers of the U.S. military.

From amphibious Seabees to maritime mammals, the ambassador was next taken to meet the

latest U.S. citizens to join the Camp Patriot team – five Atlantic bottle-nose dolphins employed by the Navy for mine clearing efforts in the region.

Jones and members of Naval Special Clearance Team One (NSCT-1) discussed the importance of the dolphins in assisting in the mine-clearing efforts of the Khor Abd Allah (KAA) waterway. The KAA is a key transit location for civilian ships carrying humanitarian assistance supplies for the people of Iraq.

Recently, Camp Patriot acquired coalition-seized Iraqi vessels carrying nearly 100 mines in the KAA. Ambassador Jones took the opportunity to learn more about the dangerous devices, and view the vessels that tried to deceive coalition forces, and, unsuccessfully, destroy the hopes of humanitarian assistance for the Iraqi people.

After completing the tour, Jones was the guest of honor at a Kuwaiti Naval Forces

hosted lunch. During the luncheon with officers of both nations, Jones passed his thanks and congratulations for the successful relationship he observed during his visit.



The Honorable Richard H. Jones, U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait visits the newest U.S. citizens at Camp Patriot, Kuwait - Kona and Katrina - Atlantic bottle-nose dolphins employed by the Navy for mine detection in shallow water. Kona and Katrina are a very important part to clearing waterways leading into Iraq, so that civilian humanitarian assistance ships can provide food, water and supplies to the people of Iraq. Kona and Katrina are cared for by members of Naval Special Clearance Team One. (U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 1st Class Joseph Krypzel)

"It is important that people know that the wonderful relationship that is being displayed by all of you here is foremost in the defense of Kuwait, and ultimately in the defense of the United States," concluded Jones. "Thank-you all."

Amphibious Power!

The Navy's Joint Venture HSV-X1, a high-speed, sealift catamaran built and designed by Australian shipbuilders, sits pierside here. The Navy's newest operational amphibious asset is a display of the pure speed and power to military forces around the globe. The vessel design was coordinated by the Navy Warfare Development Command in close partnership with elements of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The vessel's speed, ranging from 30 to 40 knots, can get troops and equipment into theater quicker than current military transport vehicles. The ability to carry such loads is a considerable savings in time and money when compared to using military and commercial aircraft. Operation Enduring Freedom is the first time the craft has been deployed for military operations. (U.S. Navy Photo by JO1 Joseph Krypzel)



Explosive History Calls Navy EOD Deep Into Operation Iraqi Freedom

By JOI Joseph Krypel

The misconception is that we blow things up," says Chief Boatswain's Mate John Crabtree, "but our goal, our real mission is to keep things from going boom and hurting a lot of people – or creating an ecological disaster that would devastate this area and it's people for years."

Crabtree, a 35-year-old Canal Winchester, Ohio native, and Master Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician is one in a long history of U.S. Navy EOD technicians – saving lives, saving locations, and remembering the devastation of the past.

Starting with the bitter and battle-torn experiences of the British in the early days of World War II, when the Germans began a demoralizing campaign against the British Isles, tons of explosive charges were purposely fused so as not to detonate until one to 80-hours later. At the height of the blitz, more than 2,200 separate areas within the city of London were evacuated because of unexploded bombs, and a large number of sea mines were washing ashore on Britain's beaches.

Faced with the immediate and urgent need to recover and dispose of the tremendous amount of unexploded ordnance, the British formed the first Mine and Bomb Disposal Squads – many of which died as a result booby-trapped ordnance.

Learning from the Allied experience, the first U.S. Naval Mine Disposal School was established at the Naval Gun Factory in 1941 – and the bomb disposal school was created just one month later.

Following WWII, the U.S. Navy consolidated its mine and bomb disposal units into a single EOD program.

Spanning the globe from the days of WWII – providing invaluable work clearing channels, harbors and captured fields of mines, unexploded bombs, projectiles and booby traps – the work of EOD teams has changed with the technology of the day, and with the threat of the times.

In all past, present and future conflicts, Navy EOD technicians have, and will continue to provide the highest level of protection to personnel and property. Their relentless efforts ensure joint and coalition forces have uninhibited battle space access as well as the free and safe movement of humanitarian aid.

Two primary targets in the beginning moments of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) were the gulf oil terminals of Mina Al Bakr (MABOT) and Khor Al Amaya (KAAOT), located within the Iraqi boundaries of the waters of the North Arabian Gulf.

These targets were important because the liberation of Iraq means the return of Iraqi assets to the people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein's regime and the Baath Party leadership.

MABOT and KAAOT are critical in that they are Iraq's only means of distributing oil from the extensive network of oil fields in the desert, through miles of pipeline, and finally into tankers that can then transit the world's oceans for commerce as part of the United Nation's Food for Oil program. Saddam Hussein was aware of their importance, and hoped to deny access to the U.S. led coalition – by any means possible.

According to statements made by American-captured Iraqi prisoners of War, the hard working civilian crews of the oil platforms were removed from MABOT and KAAOT by Saddam's army just prior to the start of U.S. led advances on Iraq – and replaced with Iraqi military personnel, to include divers and ordnance ex-

perts.

"We all knew they had ordnance to use – we just had to ensure they didn't have the chance to use them," said Crabtree, leading Chief Petty Officer for EOD Mobile Unit (EODMU) Two, Detachment 20, homeported in Little Creek, Va.

Two teams of two EOD members joined U.S. Navy and Polish Special Operations in the opening seconds of Iraq's liberation during the late hours of March 19, 2003. "We had trained for months – we knew our mission – and we were ready to do our job," explained Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Scott Hayward, a 34-year-old Rochester, N.Y. native and team member of EODMU-11, Det. 5, from Whidbey Island, Wash.

"We aren't a take-down team – we are explosive experts," continued Hayward, "Intelligence indicated the Iraqi Regime of Saddam Hussein had the ability and willingness to booby trap these platforms, just plain blow 'em up... So when Naval Special Warfare included EOD in this job, we were used in the manner we have always trained for."

Hayward explained that he and other EOD team members were placed at the trailing end of the SEALs platoon – ensuring rear security, safety, and to act as additional aggressive resources only in the case of something going astray.

"When the coalition Special Forces teams were boarding the platform, we could see the Iraqis from our positions in the boats," said Builder 1st Class Donald Shaw, 33 from Annapolis, Md., "and it became immediately apparent that they could see us."

Shaw, a member of EODMU-2, Det. 20, homeported in Little Creek, Va., and the other members of the EOD team aboard, described what they say was the longest and most intense rush of adrenaline they have ever had – and it lasted only seconds.

"They saw us – they pointed right at us and started moving around the berthing spaces where they were located," explained Shaw.

"We weren't sure what they were going to do," continued Hayward, "but when we heard the words 'Americans', and then saw the Iraqi soldiers actually putting their hands behind their heads – we became relieved, but stayed just as alert as we had been from the beginning. It was a tense few seconds."

Once the area was secured, interrogations began – and, according to Hayward and Shaw, went well.

"They were waiting to surrender," exclaimed Shaw, "They were actually glad to see us, and cooperated fully – they fired no shots, showed no real aggression, and provided EOD with the information we had been looking for."

"When the explosives guy came forward, we used every communications means available to find out what we had ahead of us," continued Hayward. "We had carried a small arsenal of our own to show these guys what we were looking for – and the visual aides we used, were the items we expected to find."

Hayward and Shaw went on to say that while there were hidden arms and ordnance, the Iraqi military placed on MABOT and KAAOT had pretty much laid-out the contraband for the coalition forces and EOD to find.

"It was pretty ironic," said Shaw, "The MABOT group had nearly all their weapons and explosives in the berthing with them." Hayward added, "The KAAOT crew didn't quite put it right in front of us, but it was

mostly staged and pre-positioned in a single location – very nice indeed."

Spanning a period of seven days, and combining the efforts of 11 EOD technicians from EODMU-11, Det. 5, EODMU-2, Dets. 20 and 22 and a command and control representative from Commander, Amphibious Group Three (CPG-3), a stockpile of surface-to-air missiles, light machine guns, cans of ammunition, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, high explosives, detonators, timing devices, and fuses totaling nearly 300 pieces were found aboard the one-mile stretch of MABOT and KAAOT.

According to the EOD technicians aboard, small arms continued to be found wrapped in blankets, stuffed into air-ducts, hidden in beds and ovens, and placed amongst the steelwork corners all over the platform.

"The Iraqis could have done some serious damage," explained Lt. Cmdr. Edan Antoine of CPG-3, "there was enough high explosives aboard to blow the platforms and cause an enormous ecological disaster – we're just glad they used their heads, and realized their actions would have affected the future of the Iraqi people."

Weapons and explosives searches were conducted by EOD technicians from beneath the water line to the top of the platform – well over 180 feet from the water up.

"We did an extensive search," said Hayward, "and we felt pretty good about the dives conducted on the structure supports and the main forty-inch oil risers even before we started." Hayward explained that while the threat of underwater charges was a real one, the condition of dive equipment found and intelligence collected during the initial contact led EOD to believe that the threat was minimal.

"The dive-gear was in pretty rough shape – missing parts, dry-rotted seals and equipment – we were able to assess early on that there was no underwater threat, but we did extensive dives just to be sure."

The Camp Patriot combined EOD team amplifies the U.S. Navy's EOD mission and reputation. Removing over two-tons of crew-serve arms, ammunition and explosives from the hands of the oppressive Baath Party regime, team technicians say that all equipment that was confiscated will be evaluated for use by the Free Iraqi Fighting Force (FIFF) to help assist in the continued disarming of the regime; ensuring a viable and secure Iraq.

"We're proud to have done our part," concluded Aviation Boatswain's Mate – Equipment 1st Class Paul Darga. "The people of Iraq can be assured that the oil terminals we secured belong to them – and the oil that now continues to flow from those terminals belongs to the free Iraq – not to Saddam Hussein."

Operation Iraqi Freedom continues to be a delicately orchestrated dance involving many nations, units, battalions and individuals – and key players from the beginning, the U.S. Navy's EOD members forward deployed to Camp Patriot.

EOD members are qualified in both static and free-fall parachute jumps and can parachute or be delivered by helicopter rope suspension techniques, including fastrope, rappel, and special purpose insert and extraction, to minefields or other areas suspected to have unexploded ordnance and booby traps. They are able to operate both closed circuit diving rigs (bubbleless units) as well as open circuit SCUBA.

CAN DO: Master Chief of The Seabees Visits Dual-Coast Bees of Camp Patriot

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

The Chief of Naval Operations Master Chief representing the Seabee community, CNOCM Harrell L. Richardson, brought his "Can Do" spirit to Camp Patriot Wednesday.

Richardson, accompanied by Command Master Chief Kevin Timmons of Naval Construction Division One, and hosted by CMDCM Kevin Eichmann of Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) One homeported in Coronado, Calif., and CMDCM Mike Holdcraft of ACB-2 homeported in Little Creek, Va., spent nearly four hours visiting, talking with, and answering the questions of the Camp Patriot Bees.



ACB-1 Equipment Operator 3rd Class Aaron Lafountain, 23, of Plattsburgh, N.Y., greets CNOCM Richardson at the Transportation Dispatch tent during his visit.

"The Seabees here have done an awesome job," praised Richardson. "... and I don't think I can say enough about just how much it all is appreciated."

Camp Patriot is home to nearly 650 amphibious specialty Seabees from ACB-1, ACB-2,

Naval Cargo Handling Group, and Underwater Construction Team One. During his visit, Richardson visited local sites of interest to include the campgrounds, Beach Support Watch Office (BSWO) and the Elevated Causeway System-Modular (ELCAS\M).

ELCAS\M, currently in the final stages of construction by the Seabees from both U.S. coasts, reaches 1,200 feet in length from ramp to pier-head, and stands high above water that is 20-feet in depth. The ELCAS\M will serve as an additional tool in the ongoing Combined Joint Logistics Over the Shore (CJLOTS) activities, as well as a key tool for the projected redeployment of troops and ammunition once Operation Iraqi Freedom's main fighting phase is declared victorious.

The combined efforts of ACB-1 and ACB-2 have proved that the U.S. Navy Seabees and their "Can Do" mindset continue to be the premier engineers of the U.S. military.

"The ELCAS looks great," said Richardson, "and it is due to the great cooperation between these two great coast forces of Seabees!"

Richardson brought a media message to the troops as well. "It's important to know, that in this day and age of real-time viewing, some pick out the 1% of negativity towards our presence out here - 99% of the people at home fully support everything you are doing - make no mistake, whether your pulling the trigger or providing the support for those that are - you are all heroes!"

Camp Patriot was just one stop on CNOCM Richardson's visit to the nearly 4,500 Seabees - half of the Seabee population - deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Other Seabees visited include Naval Mobile Construction Battalions 133, 74, 7, 4, 15, 25 and 21; Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303, and Construction Battalion Unit 402, 415 and 412.

Camp Patriot is currently home to the only Amphibious Seabees in the United States Navy - specializing in coastal construction and offload practices.

Causeway Commanders Continue Fleet Flare of Amphibious Seabees

By Lt. Summer Jones-Chiow

You may be asking yourself what the heck is a "causeway?" Chances are you may have witnessed these 360-foot platforms offloading containers and equipment at Camp Patriot's south beach during the past three months. Typically referred to as a "Barge Ferry", the Causeway Section Powered (CSP) is a platform that is powered by two 360-degree rotatable Water Jet Propulsion Assemblies. The CSP is connected to multiple nonpowered causeway sections to form a Barge Ferry that can maneuver its load to the pierhead of the Elevated Causeway System (ELCAS) or directly through the surf zone to the beach.

When Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Jessie Willie of Batesville, Miss., an Amphibious Construction Battalion One (ACB-1) Sailor with over twenty years experience, was asked about his job as the Pilot of a Barge Ferry, he said "It's cool being the Pilot of a barge ferry. This is what being a Boatswain Mate is about. We can land this ferry on almost any beach - anytime - anywhere."

According to Willie, the ship doesn't even have to pull into port. "It just drops the anchor and we pull along beside them to offload their cargo. We take the cargo to the beach and the Army picks it up, and moves it forward to the battlefield."

Barge Ferries are an essential element of the PhibCB mission to provide ship-to-shore transportation of combat supplies, ammunition and supplies in support of both Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) and Joint Logistics Over The Shore

(JLOTS) operations. Barge Ferries are operated by the Boatswain's Mates, Signalmen, Enginemen and Seaman of Bravo Company. It is certainly unique for a Seabee Battalion to have an entire company of "Fleet rates" but the PhibCBs hail from a proud tradition and these personnel affectionately refer to themselves as "Fleet Seabees!"

The idea to use hollow, sheet steel boxes as pontoons and pontoon-assembled structures was originated in 1935 by a Civil Engineer Corps officer. It was conceived that these pontoons could be used interchangeably as wharves, docks, piers, lighters, tugs and special duty barges. In order to be most effective, pontoon assembly parts were designed to be light, rugged and easy to handle.

When the United States entered World War II, the Navy was faced for the first time with the problem of landing and supplying large forces where the enemy occupied conventional harbor facilities. In 1942 this difficulty was overcome by designing pontoons that could be shipped aboard Navy vessels and easily assembled for many purposes.

In today's contingency operations, barge ferries continue to carry on a proud military heritage. Amphibious Construction Battalion One, as it is now known, was actually commissioned in 1943 and designated a Naval Construction Battalion, Pontoon, (NCB (P)). Pontoon operating battalions, like ACB-1 and ACB-2 have since participated in every major conflict including World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Operation Desert Shield/Storm and most recently Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I had no idea that barge ferries had such a major part of all those wars, but I am not surprised," said Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Michael Miller from Naples, Italy. Engineman 3rd Class Randy Tapia from Moreno Valley, Calif., added, "What I do know is that we are having an important impact out here. We are working 24 hours a day to make sure those ground forces in Iraq get the ammo and supplies they need to win this war. It makes the long hours worth it."

Since arriving at the beginning of January, barge ferries have been heavily involved with the offload of Motor Vessel (M/V) CARTER, M/V BUFFALO SOLDIER, M/V SNOEKGRACHT, SS CORNHUSKER STATE, M/V CHIPPEWA BELLE, M/V PITTSBARGER, and M/V MERLIN.

There are even more ships still coming and the offloading, will continue and backloading will soon begin, for as long as the war effort requires.

Currently, barge ferries have offloaded over 1500 containers of ammunition and the entire Elevated Causeway (ELCAS) system being constructed to form an expeditionary pier.

When asked about barge ferry operations, ACB-2 Chief Boatswain's Mate Patrick Gehrke of Pillager, Minn., said "What we do out here may not seem glamorous, but it is critical to this war effort. I've been in the amphibious warfare community for most of my career and barge ferries are critical to our ability to fight this war. I am proud to be a Fleet Seabee and proud of what we are doing out here to support the war."

ELCAS(M): Navy Elevated Causeway System to Lend Big Hand to Big Operation

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

In the minds of many, the 'Shock and Awe' to be remembered from Operation Iraqi Freedom will not be the result of any air campaign; nor will it be of any large explosion causing the destruction of troops or military headquarters. But instead, it will be of the massive offload and backload of thousands of Marines and the tons of fighting equipment and ammunition meant for all branches of service.

In what is being called the largest amphibious operation in the history of the United States, Camp Patriot, a joint-service multinational base camp constructed by Amphibious Seabees, is a key contributor to bringing the fight to Iraq – and then bringing our personnel and equipment home again.

The methods and means of moving troops and supplies are varied, but one of the primary tools built and used for the mammoth effort is the Navy's Elevated Causeway System – Modular (ELCAS(M)), owned, purchased and operated by Amphibious Construction Battalion Two.

ELCAS(M) is an expeditionary pier used to bridge the surf zone, providing an interface between lighterage, cargo vessels and the beach. Used in many exercises, and now in a war operation supporting Joint Logistics Over the Shore, ELCAS(M) is meant to support large offloads in areas where no pier facilities exist, or, in the case of Camp Patriot, where facilities or scheduling of movement need to be enhanced with additional resources.

"This is pretty monumental," explained Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Cowan, Operations Officer (S3) of ACB-2, homeported in Little Creek, Va. "This is the first time that the system has been put into use for a wartime operation, but more importantly, it was the efforts of all the PhibCBs that made it a reality."

Cowan explained that while an asset of ACB-2, the ELCAS(M) was constructed in a joint-effort with ACB-1, homeported in Coronado, Calif.

"We have trained together for years, and while we may own it, this was a Seabee project – not an east or west coast project," continued Cowan.

The U.S. Navy has only two groups responsible for amphibious construction, one on each coast of the United States... and both now at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

Construction began on April 1st, and the now completed 1,400-foot pier was completed on April 18th. Amongst busy beaches and real estate limited spaces, the 48-person per shift crew was hampered by equipment and weather delays, but the 'combined can-do Gator Bee' team completed their work three days ahead of schedule in mid-April.

With a 3,000-foot pier-length capability and a 24-foot wide roadway, the ELCAS(M) features two 175-ton cranes, two tractor trailer turntables, and lighting for 24-hour operation capabilities.

The pier is structurally supported by 24-inch steel piles that come in 30-foot-long pieces. These piles are welded together, then driven into the ocean floor until they reach a sufficient depth as support the bearing capac-

ity.

According to Chief Steel Worker Charles Bailey, Project Leading Chief Petty Officer, the soil at the ELCAS(M) site was very soft. "Because the soil was so soft, we had to use much longer lengths of pile than we're routinely used to," explained Bailey. "All the piles used were more than 76-feet long, and some used were as long 95-feet."

The pier can accommodate three-wide and five-wide barge ferries, as well as Army and Navy Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM-8) vessels, Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vessels, and Logistics Support Vessels (LSV).

The roadway and pierhead are capable of handling two-way heavy hauling truck traffic, and cargo throughput is conducted on both sides of this expeditionary pier.

According to Chief Equipment Operator Ricardo Hernandez, one of two Safety Officers assigned to the project, the ELCAS(M) preparation and construction were completed incident free.

"The site itself had to be inherently safe," commented Hernandez, an ACB-1 crew-member. "Everyone had to know the job, the safety aspects, and what precautions were necessary to achieve this tasking

safely. Everyone worked together to ensure that adequate safety precautions were continuously taken. We're very proud of everyone's 'safe-thinking' work ethic."

Prior to the completion, Navy barge ferry operations moved over 1,500 containers instream, while Camp Patriot 'single-service' personnel offloaded over 15,000 containers and pallets that were pushed forward to the fight.

The professionalism displayed in the hectic environment of construction continues today as the battle-tired forces from Iraq return and begin their journey home.

Over the following months, it is expected that thousands of containers containing military supplies and equipment will transit the ELCAS(M), while the 'single-service' team at Camp Patriot continuously provides the support that will bring Operation Iraqi Freedom to its eventual end – and providing the leadership as well as the means to expedite the process are the hard-charging Amphibious Seabees of the United States Navy.

Camp Patriot is currently home to the only Amphibious Seabees in the United States Navy – specializing in coastal construction and ship to shore throughput. Partnering with the PHIBCBs are nearly 2,500 active duty and reserve Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen serving and supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Following just 18 days of construction, the U.S. Navy's Elevated Causeway System-Modular (ELCAS (M)) stands completed at Camp Patriot. ELCAS (M) is an expeditionary pier used to bridge the surf zone, providing an interface between lighterage, cargo vessels and the beach. Constructed by the U.S. Navy Seabees from both U.S. coastlines, this 1,400-foot pier is being used to support Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS), and the backload of what will be thousands of cargo containers holding military supplies and equipment returning home from Operation Iraqi Freedom. ELCAS (M) was constructed in a joint effort by Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACB) One, homeported in Coronado, Calif., and ACB-2, homeported in Little Creek, Va. (U.S. Navy Photo by JO1 Joseph Krypel)



Camp Patriot AAFES Boosts Morale and Makes Sales

By JOI Joseph Krypel

A joint-service, multinational force of thousands at Camp Patriot often has little time to enjoy "home-style" activities. But the local Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) outlet here not only raises the morale of all by providing a clean and comfortable environment, but claims its own boost in a highly competitive marketplace of military exchanges.

"We're definitely not the biggest - but we are extremely competitive in our sales as compared to much larger locations in this theater as well as back home," said Melisa Dennett, team lead and store manager of the Camp Patriot AAFES.

According to Dennett, the AAFES location covers nearly 3000-feet of sales space, and averages \$30,000 in sales per day.

"Of course our sales bounce up and down based on custom-

ers moving through," explained Dennett, "...but with the current backload happening here, we're reaching some very substantial numbers."

According to Dennett, AAFES itself carries an average of 800 to \$900,000 per month in sales - while the services complex and food court it neighbors does approximately \$250,000 per month in sales.

The mix of military services here brings an extraordinary flavor to Camp Patriot. Totaling nearly 3000 active and recalled reservists, Camp Patriot is more like a small hospitable town than a forward deployed base camp, and with the local facility, there is an immense, upbeat attitude that just continues to grow.

Nester Millan, an AAFES team member and native of Puerto Rico says "If it wasn't for the Soldiers and Sailors

here helping out, we wouldn't be as successful as we are - we are all one big team."

Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Wendy Connett of Beach Master Unit One, homebased in Coronado, Calif., not only spends her money, but spends some of her off-time assisting the AAFES staff, adding to the team success that Millan spoke of.

"The staff here helps us in more ways than they know, and when I have some free time, I want to help them as much as possible. They're here for us, and it's important for them to know that we're here for them too," explained Connett.

With a staff of five, the Department of Defense Civilian contractors that operate the Camp Patriot AAFES live the motto "We go where you go." "We volunteer to come here," stated Susan Bonsalle, a DOD

Civilian employee that helps run and maintain the newly opened store. "All of us at AAFES are in this with you guys. We support you, and we try to make your very difficult jobs a little easier to deal with."

According to Dennett, keeping customers happy is simple. "We don't have empty shelves. Our team works long hours to ensure that the people here have selection - and we ensure that if we don't have it, we try to get it."

Dennett explained that many of the products carried in the AAFES here are ordered months in advance, taking up to 95-days from order to delivery.

"There are a number of items that we purchase locally to keep the shelves full," says Dennett, "...but that's just part of good business for good people."

Kuwait's Minister of Defense Thanks GCC

By JOI Joseph Krypel

Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Jaber al-Mubarak al-Sabah bid Gulf Country Council (GCC) troops participating in Peninsula Shield farewell and thanks



Wednesday from the parade deck of Kuwait Navy Base and Camp Patriot.

Amongst a flurry of flags, one for each international representative present, hundreds of GCC troops and area military commanders from the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, stood at attention while Kuwait's Armed forces Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen Fahad al-Amir, and Commander, Kuwait Naval Forces, Maj. Gen. Ahmed Y. al-Mulla welcomed Sheikh al-Sabah and his ministerial entourage.

During the Sheikhs' visit, a Kuwait Navy color-guard and band played the Minister's Anthem, and presented the over 1,000 GCC troops on station for inspection and review.

Upon completion of his review, various key military commanders from

GCC states bid their farewells and vowed continued support to Kuwait, and the continued protection provided by GCC resolutions.

"You have kept Kuwaiti waters safe from harm, and we have appreciated your presence and your continued support," commented Sheikh al-Sabah. "We are brothers. Kuwait will never forget your assistance."

While GCC states and Peninsula Shield troops played no direct role in the war with Iraq, the GCC resolution, adopted shortly after the 1991 Gulf war, provides protection to the North Arabian Gulf nations in the theater of operations.

The GCC is made up of member nations Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar.

Task Force 51 Bids Farewell to Camp Patriot

By JO1 Joseph Krypel

Following over five-months of operations in the area, Rear Adm. W. Clyde Marsh, Commander, Task Force 51 / Amphibious Group Three, bid farewell to the shore-based forces of Camp Patriot, and his friends at Kuwait Navy Base.

During his final visit to Camp Patriot and Kuwait Navy Base, Marsh paid a visit to Kuwait's Chief of Naval Forces, Maj. Gen. Ahmed Y. Al-Mulla. While speaking together,



Rear Adm. Marsh shakes hands with Petty Officer 1st Class Wilds and others following the recent Admiral's Call.

both naval leaders expressed their continued support for one another, and looked backed upon the early days of their fledgling friendship.

"It has been the experience of a lifetime," commented Al-Mulla, "... and it is important for you to remember that you will always have friends in Kuwait."

"We certainly have appreciated your hospitality, your support and friendship," replied Marsh. "Without your friendship and leader-

ship, our operations here would not be possible."

Marsh and Al-Mulla exchanged gifts prior to leaving one another; Marsh being presented with a Kuwaiti Flag and ball cap, and presenting a signed recent photo of the amphibious big deck carriers in formation in the North Arabian Gulf.

Accompanied by members of his core staff, and Commander, Camp Patriot, Capt. Donald P. Cook, Marsh took an opportunity to take one last look around Kuwait Navy Base. Touring from north to south, Marsh viewed wash-down operations and backloads currently underway by the Marines of Amphibious Task Force East (ATF East), as well the fully operational Elevated Causeway System-Modular (ELCAS(M)) constructed by the Gator Bees of Amphibious Construction Battalions One and Two.

Spending time with the troops has always been an important part of Marsh's leadership, and his last visit would be no different, as he dined with the over 3,000 joint-service men and women here at the Camp Patriot food court.

Following lunch, Marsh held an all-hands Admiral's Call at one of the recently completed tension fabric tents owned and constructed by ACB-1.

"You have set the standard," Marsh told the hundreds of assembled troops. "As the gate keepers to Kuwait and Iraq, you had anchorages to take care of and lighterage to run – and you have handled your duties and yourselves better than anyone could have expected."

Marsh went on to tell his troops here that the

records that have been set, and the coalition building that has been performed at Camp Patriot will forever be in the hearts of their shipmates, their Navy and their nation.

"It would take an entire afternoon to run down the list of your accomplishments," continued Marsh. "But know that you all here have become the model for Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) operations, Base Camp operations, and Joint and Coalition operations – you have written history and we are all very proud of you!"

In wrapping up his comments, Marsh told the residents of Camp Patriot, "I am personally proud of each and every one of you – I would be proud to shake the hand of each and every one of you – Well done!"

And that is nearly what he did. Following the Admiral's Call, Marsh made himself available for handshakes and photo sessions with any and all residents that wanted to participate.

Storekeeper 3rd Class Tat Tam, 32, from Baltimore, Md., jumped at the opportunity, saying that the heartfelt words of Rear Adm. Marsh really hit home for him. "By coming back to Camp Patriot, where he started this deployment, he proved to us that our efforts have never been underplayed – that really means a lot to me," said Tam.

Lt. Cmdr. Johnny Adams, Supply Officer for Camp Patriot said, "It's extremely considerate of the Admiral to come here to personally thank all the troops – from the top, down – that's just the kind of man he is."

Rear Adm. Marsh will be succeeded as CTF-51 by Capt. Kenneth Golden, Commander, Amphibious Squadron One, once he has departed the theater of operations.

Royal Marine Sends Thanks / Wishes to Camp Patriot

The following is an email to all at Camp Patriot. It was received May 7th, 2003 from Cpl. Tom Burke, British Royal Marines:

Dear Friends,
After many months in Iraq working with 15MEU, living in various "HOLES" in the desert and derelict buildings, it was a pleasure to be sent on a task to Camp Patriot. My team was basically providing beach security whilst the Sea Bees helped us load up our ships with ammo & stores.

The standard of living created by the Sea Bees and associated support from other services at Camp Patriot is outstanding.

The guys were really impressed with the air conditioned tent accommodation, great food and soda in the galley & the various amenities at the PX. Not to mention of course the gym and swimming pools. It turned out to be the closest my guys will get to R & R!

So a big thanks from Royal Marines -Combat Support troop at LFSP (Landing Force

Support Party) for your hospitality.

A special hello to John Weatherwax and his crew of welders, it was great getting to know these guys and many other Sea Bees in the week or so we had the privilege of staying at Camp Patriot.

I hope this operation will keep a bond between British & U.S Forces. On my return to the UK I will be setting up a web site to encourage continued contact between our forces. It will be a community type website that is located at

www.bootnecks.com & any interested folks can communicate with me via tom@bootnecks.com (bootnecks is a nickname for Marines. Not sure if also applies to U.S Marines...a question for your readers :-)

I hope all the U.S Forces get home asap or at least in time for Christmas. Most of us are heading home in the next week or so.

Best wishes and thanks

Tom

P.S.: *did I mention how great a warm shower was?*

Sand Dune Diner is Only of its Kind

By Lt. Tom Price

Among the things that make Camp Patriot unique, one operation truly gives the camp a distinct flavor. The Sand Dune Diner, located in the heart of the camp, is the only 100% military operated galley in the theater. This may not sound like something to write home about, but in terms of security and mission support, it is a definite stand-out.

Lt. Cmdr. Johnny Adams, Camp Supply Officer, from Hazelhurst, Miss., said that "From the beginning of planning sessions for Camp Patriot, it was agreed that Amphibious Construction Battalion One (ACB-1) would construct and operate a full military galley in order to ensure safe, quality meals all the time." Being one of a kind is never easy, and the logistics of setting up and operating a galley in the region proved to be no small task. American style foods and U.S. approved sources were extremely hard to come by, as were additional supplies and equipment. Galley staffing was also challenging, as each tenant command had to provide both Mess Management Specialists (MSs) and Food Service Attendants (FSAs).

MSC (SW/AW) Elmer Manarang, the Camp Food Service Officer, from San Diego, Calif., ensured that all of these issues were ironed out and that nutritious meals were served. Manarang, a veteran of numerous deployments and field exercises was, at first, hard pressed to make it all work. "Timing is the key factor for the whole operation. Timing the delivery of food stores, meal hours, watch teams, and especially food preparation. "We have anywhere from three to four thousand hungry people to get through the lines, utilizing the same equipment we normally use to support one thousand. In spite of that, we still have some of the shortest lines compared to other nearby bases... It all boils down to making the best use of the available resources, at the right times."

Luckily, there are other willing and experienced hands to help pull it all

together. MSC (SW/AW) Duane Wright from Silver Springs, N.Y., and MSC (SW/AW) Deborah Jackson from Dayton, Ohio, have been invaluable players in the galley operation. Their oversight ensures that meals are properly prepared and served on time, sanitation standards are maintained, and that the best service possible is provided.

The MS and FSA staff, numbering 76, come from numerous commands and service branches. The large camp population requires each individual to play a central role in the daily success of the galley.

"Things are pretty smooth now, but those first couple of days were difficult," says MS2 (SCW) Robert Caesar from Yonkers, N.Y. "Helping the FSAs learn their duties, preparing food under field conditions, directing the serving lines. Just getting everyone into the rhythm of operations took some time." The actual operation of the galley is a 24-hour process. Staff members have to work grueling 10-hour shifts. Many of them often put in additional overtime to ensure everything goes according to plan.

In addition to the hard working MSs and FSAs, ACB-1's Charlie Company also made the galley possible by constructing the facilities and making the wide variety of food service equipment operational. "The biggest hurdle was finding all of the right electrical gear, since Kuwaiti power requirements and U.S. power requirements are very different. The electricians definitely had to put in some extra time to get everything to work. Just finding plug adapters and transformers took some doing," stated Utilitiesman 1st Class (SCW) David Fulcher, Charlie Company's Repair Parts Petty Officer.

With experienced hands, and more than a little hard work, the plans for the Camp Patriot galley became reality. Serving nearly 4000 camp tenants three meals a day, seven days a week, the Sand Dune Diner is truly one of a kind.

From left, Builder 2nd Class Eric Chamberlain and Steelworker 3rd Class Chad Graves, attached to Amphibious Construction Battalion One, homebased in Coronado, Calif., raise the knuckle crane they use to reach the next panel structure of the new tension fabric tent. (U.S. Navy Photo by JO1 Joseph Krypzel)



Camp Patriot's combination of Amphibious Construction Battalions One and Two continue making life more comfortable for the over 3,500 residents Camp Patriot. ACB-1 and ACB-2 have again combined efforts in the raising of one of two 60x160x26 tension fabric structures that will become the new galley tents for camp residents. The structure, owned by ACB-1, is chemical, biological and radio-logical resistant, infrared transparent, and can withstand wind gusts of up to 137 mph. (U.S. Navy Photo by Journalist 1st Class Joseph Krypzel)



Camp Patriot: Rotating Door of Diversity

By JOI Joseph Krypel

A joint-service, multinational force of thousands have called Camp Patriot home for months. As major military phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom scale down, the revolutionary diversity and flexibility that has defined Camp Patriot continues.

Referred to from within as a 'military melting pot,' Camp Patriot has been a scene of inter-service cooperativeness not experienced before by many.

Since its standup in mid-January, Camp Patriot has been the permanent duty station for an average of 3,000 U.S. servicemembers comprised of more than 30 separate commands from every branch of the military service.

Blending the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps is not uncommon, but when you pepper in the Army's Transportation Command with the U.S. Navy "Gator Bees" of Amphibious Construction Battalions 1 and 2, along with Coast Guard port security units and Air Force Meteorologists, plus a dab of the joint Navy/Coast Guard team that is Naval Coastal Warfare – the recipe for success has been proven.

Beyond its residents, this forward-deployed, expeditionary base camp has been a transition point for thousands of Gulf Country Council troops and equipment as well as coalition forces including the United Kingdom and Australian

troops supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Stationed aboard Kuwait Naval Base, Camp Patriots' joint-service leadership has always maintained a close host-nation relationship.

"We are guests here," says Capt. Donald P. Cook, Camp Patriot's commanding officer. "Our role and our relationship is, and has been, extremely important to our hosts; and our relationship has developed into a very unique friendship that can never be forgotten."

Working side-by-side, this truly diverse operational single service team has been directly responsible for such operations as the offload, and now backload, of tens-of-thousands of pieces of military supplies and equipment, as well as personnel moving in and out of the Central Command area of operations. With the aid of such tools as the U.S. Navy Elevated Causeway System-Modular (ELCAS(M)), and the supreme transport planning of the U.S. Army's 143rd Transportation Command and its subordinate units – Camp Patriot has been incident free and brags a 100 percent accomplishment record for every mission assigned.

Hosting strands of dignitaries is also part of the Camp Patriot standard operating procedure. From its parent commander, Rear Adm. W. Clyde Marsh,

commander, Amphibious Group 3 to the U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, the Honorable Richard H. Jones, U.S. and Kuwaiti forces alike have been proud to put on display what is considered by many here the best working relationship in the theater of operations.

During a visit by the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Fahad Al Amir, a point was made that placed a large amount of pride on the shoulders of every service man and woman stationed here.

"I am extremely impressed and proud by the Kuwaiti and American capability at this camp to work as a unified body," said Al Amir. "I have not seen such professionalism anywhere else, and I hope that all the other commands in the Kuwaiti theater will learn from what I have been able to see and experience here."

Pride and professionalism have been key in every modern day operation, and according to Cook, this holds even more true here.

"This camp is so good and so hospitable that we have folks from the field – from all nations – wanting to come here for liberty! Camp Patriot and Kuwait Naval Base is the picture of pride and the example of joint and coalition forces operability at it's best," concluded Cook.



Amongst a sea of pride, Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV), and a waiting Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC), the Marines of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (15 MEU) prepare for their return to the Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group (TARG) upon completion of their missions as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The San Diego based TARG consists of USS TARAWA (LHA 1), USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47) and USS DULUTH (LPD 6). The Marines of 15 MEU, homebased at Camp Pendleton, Calif., played a major role in the removal of Saddam Hussein and the oppressive Baath Party leadership. (U.S. Navy Photo by Journalist 1st Class Joseph Krypel)